

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PP, PGOV

SUBJ: PAPUA NEW GUINEA AND AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENTS ANNOUNCE
AGREEMENT ON TIMING OF SELF- GOVERNMENT

REF: CANBERRA 2850

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: PAPUA NEW GUINEA AND AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENTS
ISSUED COMMUNIQUE MAY 22 SETTING UP TIMETABLE FOR GAINING
LEGISLATIVE APPROVAL IN BOTH COUNTRIES FOR SELF- GOVERNMENT OF
PNG. TIMING OF STEPS TOWARD SELF- GOVERNMENT SUGGESTS THAT DATE
FOR INDEPENDENCE COULD BE PROPOSED AT 1974 MEETING OF TRUSTEE-
SHIP COUNCIL, ALTHOUGH GOA OFFICIAL STATES THIS IS NOT INTENTION
AT THIS TIME. DATE OF PNG INDEPENDENCE PUBLICLY MENTIONED BY
EXTERNAL TERRITORIES MINISTER MORRISON IN PAST FEW MONTHS IS
SEPTEMBER 1974. FOLLOWING INFORMATION SENT AS SUPPLEMENT TO THAT
CONTAINED REFTEL. END SUMMARY.

2. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF A COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT CONCLUSION OF
CONSTITUTIONAL TALKS IN PORT MORESBY ON MAY 22: QTE AGREEMENT ON
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TWO- STAGE SELF- GOVERNMENT.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA WILL ACHIEVE SELF- GOVERNMENT IN TWO STAGES, WHICH WILL BE COMPLETED BY THE ADOPTION OF ITS HOMEGROWN CONSTITUTION IN THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY AND THE PASSING OF ENABLING LEGISLATION IN THE AUSTRALIAN PARLIAMENT.

QTE THIS WAS ANNOUNCED IN A COMMUNIQUE FOLLOWING TALKS AT THE WEEKEND BETWEEN THE MINISTER FOR EXTERNAL TERRITORIES, MR. W. L. MORRISON, THE CHIEF MINISTER OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA, MR. MICHAEL SOMARE, THE DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER, DR. JOHN GUISE, AND THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE, FATHER JOHN MOMIS. THE MEETING, HELD AT THE REQUEST OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE AND ARRANGED BY THE CHIEF MINISTER, WAS ATTENDED ALSO BY THE ADMINISTRATOR, MR. L. W. JOHNSON, AS WELL AS BY FOUR OTHER COMMITTEE MEMBERS, MR. MACKENZIE DAUGI (MHA, NORTHERN), MR. JOHN KAUPA (MHA, CHAUVE), MR. JOHN KAPUTIN (MHA, RABAU) AND MR. STANIS TOLIMAN (MHA, BOGIA).

QTE THE TALKS WERE MARKED BY A FRANK EXCHANGE OF VIEWS WHICH LED TO A FULLER MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE AUSTRALIAN AND PAPUA NEW GUINEA POSITIONS. THE SUCCESS OF THE TALKS INDICATED THE DESIRABILITY OF HOLDING SIMILAR MEETINGS FROM TIME TO TIME.

QTE THE FOLLOWING TIMETABLE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SELF- GOVERNMENT WAS AGREED UPON.

QTE DECEMBER 1973: FORMAL SELF- GOVERNMENT WILL BE INTRODUCED BY MEANS OF AMENDMENTS TO THE PAPUA NEW GUINEA ACT PASSED BY THE AUSTRALIAN PARLIAMENT. THE ACT WILL THEN REFLECT IN LAW THE PRESENT SITUATION OF VIRTUAL SELF- GOVERNMENT.

QTE FEBRUARY 1974: THE FINAL REPORT AND DRAFT CONSTITUTION RECOMMENDED BY THE CONSTITUTIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE WILL BE TABLED IN THE PAPUA NEW GUINEA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY. THE CONSTITUTION WILL PROVIDE FOR ALL MAJOR ASPECTS OF THE SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT AND WILL INCLUDE PROVISIONS FOR THE TRANSITION TO INDEPENDENCE.

QTE APRIL 1974: THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY WILL MEET IN SPECIAL SESSION TO CONSIDER AND ADOPT THE CONSTITUTION. FOLLOWING THE ADOPTION BY THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY OF THE CONSTITUTION IT WOULD BE RESERVED FOR THE ASSENT OF THE GOVERNOR- GENERAL.

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QTE MAY 1974: THE AUSTRALIAN PARLIAMENT WILL CONSIDER FURTHER AMENDMENTS TO THE PAPUA NEW GUINEA ACT TO REMOVE FROM THAT ACT THOSE PARTS WHICH PROVIDE FOR THE INTERNAL CONSTITUTION OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA AND WHICH HAVE BEEN INCLUDED IN THE PAPUA NEW GUINEA CONSTITUTION AS ADOPTED BY THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY. FOLLOWING THE PASSING OF THE AMENDMENTS TO THE PAPUA NEW GUINEA ACT, THE

GOVERNOR-

GENERAL WILL BE REQUESTED TO ASSENT TO THESE AMENDMENTS
AND TO THE PAPUA NEW GUINEA CONSTITUTION.

QTE IT WAS AGREED THAT THIS TIMETABLE WOULD BE PUT TO THE
AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT FOR APPROVAL AND SUBMITTED TO THE HOUSE
OF ASSEMBLY FOR RATIFICATION AT ITS JUNE MEETING. END QTE.

3. COMMENT: IN DISCUSSIONS WITH EMBASSY ALAN KERR, ASSISTANT
SECRETARY, EXTERNAL TERRITORIES, NOTED THAT FOREGOING COMMUNIQUE
SETS OUT MORE PRECISELY THE AGREED APPROACH TO SELF- GOVERNMENT
BY THE PNG AND AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENTS. EMBOFF ASKED IF THIS
DOCUMENT WAS PREPARED SPECIFICALLY WITH A VIEW TO PROVIDING A
BASIS IN THE 1974 MEETING OF THE TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL FOR NAMING
A SPECIFIC DATE FOR PAPUA NEW GUINEA INDEPENDENCE. KERR RESPONDED
THAT THIS HAD NOT BEEN A CONSIDERATION, ALTHOUGH FROM THE WAY
THE TIMETABLE FOR SELF- GOVERNMENT WAS DRAFTED, HE COULD SEE A

LOGIC TO SUCH AN ASSUMPTION. KERR NOTED THAT THE MEETING WHICH
PRODUCED THE COMMUNIQUE TOOK PLACE ON MAY 19 AND THAT THE
PRODUCT OF THE MEETING HAD THE CONCURRENCE OF ALL WHO PARTICIPATED,
INCLUDING THE CRITIC OF AUSTRALIAN METHODS IN PUSHING SELF-
GOVERNMENT, FATHER JOHN MOMIS. KERR ALSO POINTED OUT THAT IN
ADDITION TO HAVING A DRAFT CONSTITUTION BY NEXT FEBRUARY, THE
CONSTITUTIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE WAS EXPECTED TO COME UP WITH
CERTAIN PROVISIONS FOR THE TRANSITION TO INDEPENDENCE AT THE
SAME TIME. IN SUM, HE SAID, THE CONSTITUTION TO BE DRAWN UP
WOULD SERVE NOT ONLY DURING PNG'S PHASE OF SELF- GOVERNMENT BUT
WOULD CONTINUE ON AS THE CONSTITUTION WHEN THE COUNTRY
BECOMES INDEPENDENT.

4. AN AGREEMENT TO THE COMMUNIQUE BY LEADERS OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL
PLANNING COMMITTEE INDICATES AN ACCEPTANCE OF ACHIEVING A
CONSTITUTION WITHIN A VERY SHORT PERIOD OF TIME. IT WOULD APPEAR
THAT THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE WILL BE CIRCUMSCRIBED TO SOME
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EXTENT BY ACCEPTANCE OF THIS TIMETABLE. IN PARTICULAR, IT IS
HARD TO SEE HOW A CONSTITUTION RADICALLY DIFFERENT FROM ONE
THAT DESCRIBES THE CURRENT PARLIAMENTARY SITUATION IN PNG CAN
BE PRODUCED WITHIN ABOUT EIGHT MONTHS. WHAT ENDUCEMENTS IF ANY
THE AUSTRALIAN SIDE GAVE EITHER TO ASSIST THE COMMITTEE IN ITS
WORK OR TO SUPPORT FOR THE GOVERNMENT IN GENERAL FOR AGREEMENT
TO THE COMMUNIQUE IS NOT CLEAR.

5. IN AN UNRELATED ITEM, THE FINANCIAL REVIEW REPORTED ON
MAY 23 AN INCREASE IN RECRUITMENT FOR THE PACIFIC
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